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COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

"A Tradition of Service"

DATE May 12, 2015

CONFIDENTIAL
DISPOSITION SHEET

FILE NO. IV 2318310

FROM: JACQUES A. LA BERGE, CHIEF
NORTH PATROL DIVISION

TO: DONNIE L. MAULDIN, CAPTAIN
INTERNAL AFFAIRS BUREAU

SUBJECT: **TRAVIS W. STEEN #[redacted]**
Deputy Sheriff Generalist
Santa Clarita Valley Station
North Patrol Division

Upon consideration of the facts developed in this investigation, I have determined that **Subject Steen** will be **DISCHARGED** from his position as a Deputy Sheriff Generalist for the reasons set forth in the attached documentation. This decision may be reconsidered based upon the employee's response.

Jacques A. La Berge, Chief — Date 05/12/15

CASE REVIEWED BY

Richard J. Barrantes, Assistant Sheriff — Date 5-12-15

Michael J. Rothans, Assistant Sheriff — Date 5/12/15

Neal Tyler, Executive Officer — Date 5/12/15

Jim McDonnell, Sheriff — Date 5-12-15

The evidence developed in this investigation supports the following charges:

1. That in violation of Department Manual of Policy and Procedures Section 3-01/030.05, General Behavior; and/or 3-01/050.85, Fraternization and Prohibited Associations, on or about 2013 through January 30, 2014, Subject Steen admittedly maintained a personal relationship with [redacted] and/or [redacted] both convicted felons, and/or failed to notify his unit commander of his relationship with them, as evidenced by, but not limited to:

   a. admitting to contacting or being contacted in the summer of 2013 by [redacted] who Subject Steen knew had just been released from prison; and/or,

   b. admitting he accompanied both [redacted] and [redacted] as they participated in motorcycles rides, and/or attended drinking establishments, and/or spent personal time together; and/or,

   c. admitting he held on to a traffic citation ([redacted]) in the name of [redacted] in his possession after [redacted] asked him if he could talk to the deputy who wrote the citation, and or words to that effect; and/or,

   d. failing to seek or receive, authorization from his Unit Commander to maintain a personal relationship with [redacted] and/or [redacted]

   Subject Steen's conduct brought discredit to himself and/or the Department as patrons and employees of [redacted] and [redacted] knew or believed that [redacted] and [redacted] had a criminal history and/or belonged to a motorcycle gang, and that Subject Steen was employed with the Sheriff's Department.

2. That in violation of Department Manual of Policy and Procedures Section 3-01/030.05, General Behavior; and/or 3-01/050.85, Fraternization and Prohibited Associations, on or between 2011 and 2012, Subject Steen admitted he relied on the criminal connections of his motorcycle mechanic named [redacted], who he believed was associated with or a member of the Carnales motorcycle gang, to contact and retrieve his stolen seat that was removed from his motorcycle after meeting and conversing with a Carnales motorcycle gang member, [redacted] at [redacted]. Subject Steen knew that [redacted] was able to contact [redacted] and direct [redacted] to return the seat. Subject Steen went to [redacted] home and retrieved his seat at the direction of [redacted] Subject Steen failed to notify his unit commander of his relationship with [redacted] and/or his contact with [redacted]

3. That in violation of the Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures 3-01/030.05, General Behavior; and/or 3-01/040.90, Reporting Information; and/or 3-01/050.30, Off Duty Incidents; and/or 3-01/030.06, Disorderly Conduct; and/or

3-01/030.10, Obedience to Laws, Regulations, and Orders (pertaining to Battery, 242 C.P.C.); and/or 3-01/000.13, Professional Conduct – Core Values, on or about January 30, 2014, Subject Steen engaged in a pattern of undesirable and unprofessional behavior when he demonstrated disorderly conduct and battered [redacted] in a public place where he was known to be employed by the Sheriff's Department. Subject Steen was named as a subject in a criminal complaint (Sheriff Department URN 014-01356-0613-054) and Internal Criminal Investigation Bureau supplementary report (914-00016-2003-441). Although charges were not filed by the District Attorney's Office, Subject Steen failed to timely disclose his conduct and involvement in the assault against [redacted] to the Department, and/or failed to take appropriate police action by disclosing information to the investigating deputy personnel or supervisor on scene. Subject Steen conducted himself in a manner that caused undue embarrassment and/or damage to the reputation of, and/or eroded the public's confidence in the Sheriff's Department, as evidenced by, but limited to the following:

a. admitting that he remained in the company of [redacted] (known convicted felons) and [redacted] and consumed alcoholic beverages with them even after witnessing [redacted] and [redacted] being restrained when they attempted to attack his [redacted], at [redacted] and thereafter traveling with them to [redacted], where they assaulted [redacted] and/or,

b. stating he intervened and was "playing police," as [redacted] and [redacted] approached [redacted] and challenged him to a fight; and/or,

c. stating publicly and to [redacted] that he wanted to batter someone, prior to assaulting [redacted], and/or words to that effect; and/or,

d. striking [redacted] in the face with his fist; and/or,

e. retreating into the establishment and not disclosing his involvement or information to assist the investigating deputies uncover those involved; and/or,

f. greeting investigating deputy personnel at the crime scene, but failing to disclose information regarding the incident to them and/or Department supervisors.

4. That in violation of the Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures Section 3-01/040.76, Obstructing an Investigation/Influencing a Witness, on or about January 30, 2014, through February 2, 2014, Subject Steen, actively interfered with an investigation by speaking with witnesses in order to influence their testimony, as evidenced by, but not limited to:

   a. advising [redacted] that he was under investigation and asked her not to say anything to Department investigators because he did not want to get in trouble, and/or words to that effect; and/or,

   b. advising [redacted] that he could lose his job if the Department understood his involvement in the assault of [redacted] and/or asking [redacted] to tell investigators he was not involved in the incident and did not do anything, and/or words to that effect; and/or,

   c. asking [redacted] if she had his best interests in mind after telling her Department investigators might be contacting her regarding the [redacted] incident, and/or words to that effect.

5. That in violation of the Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures Section 3-01/040.70, False Statements; and/or 3-01/040.75, Failure to Make Statements and/or Making False Statements during Departmental Internal Investigations, on or about January 30, 2014, through February 1, 2014, Subject Steen failed to make full, complete and/or truthful statements regarding his involvement in the assault of [redacted], as evidenced by, but not limited to:

   a. stating to Sergeant Curran, "Oh it wasn't like that. I just rolled up after the fight and then you guys got there," and/or words to that effect; and/or,

   b. stating, "No," when Deputy Ruth Rodriguez asked Subject Steen if he knew what had happened at the incident, and/or words to that effect; and/or,

   c. stating to Lieutenant John Rush that he was not involved in the fight at [redacted] on January 30, 2014.

6. That in violation of the Department's Manual of Policy and Procedures Section 3-01/040.70, False Statements; and/or 3-01/040.75, Failure to Make Statements and/or Making False Statements during Departmental Internal Investigations, on or about April 9, 2015, Subject Steen failed to make full, complete and/or truthful

statements during his administrative interview, as evidenced by, but not limited to:

a. stating, "and then I think, I like, walked in a little bit more back in and then all of a sudden I hear there was a fight," and/or words to that effect; and/or,

b. stating, "I don't know," when asked, how did the fight start, and/or words to that effect; and/or,

c. stating, "Didn't, I, when I walked out, the fire engine was pulling in," and/or words to that effect when he was asked what did he see; and/or,

d. stating, "No way. I'm safe inside," when asked if he went outside to look at anything, and/or words to that effect; and/or,

e. stating, "I'd say no," when told that [redacted] said he saw Subject Steen throw several punches at Mr. [redacted], and/or words to that effect; and/or,

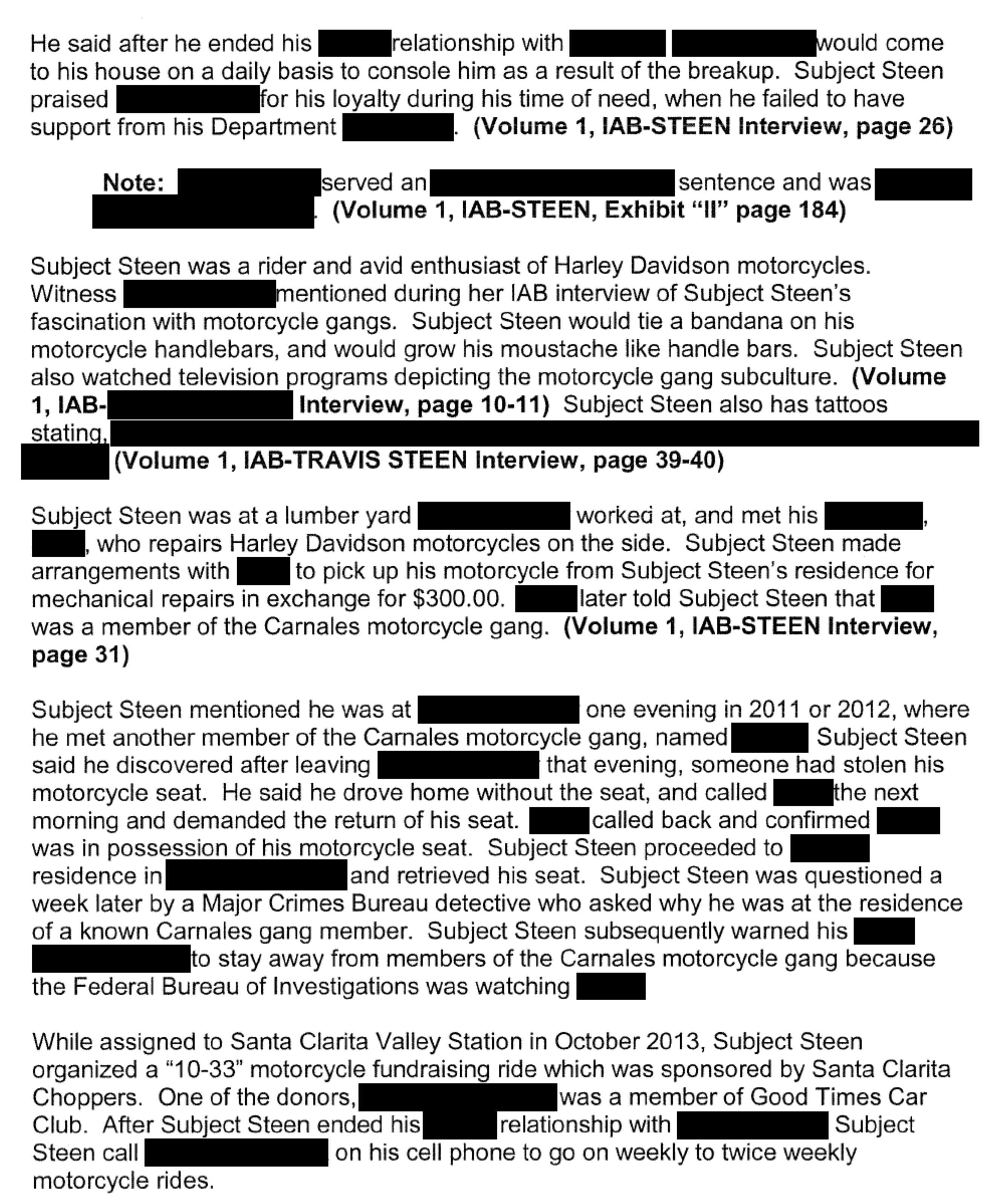
f. stating, "There was no incident," when asked if he notified the Santa Clarita Watch Commander, and/or words to that effect.

Additionally, the evidence in this investigation does not support a violation of Manual of Policy and Procedures Section 3-01/030.16, Family Violence. Although Subject Steen's [redacted] [redacted] alleged that Subject Steen engaged in at least two acts of domestic violence against her during their [redacted] and [redacted] made similar allegations of domestic abuse during their [redacted] relationship, there was not enough evidence to substantiate a violation of Department policy. These allegations are unresolved.

SUMMARY:

Subject Travis Steen was hired as a Deputy Sheriff on April 19, 2001, and was assigned to Santa Clarita Valley Station on April 12, 2009. Subject Steen [redacted] Witness [redacted] in 2008, and has been separated and going through the process of divorce since August 2013. Subject Steen said he started a [redacted] relationship with Witness [redacted] from August 2013 to December 2013.

Subject Steen grew up with a group of [redacted] [redacted] [redacted] and [redacted]. Subject Steen said he has known [redacted] since he was 10 years old. When his [redacted] heard [redacted] was getting out of prison, they decided to meet with and mentor [redacted] **(Volume 1, IAB-STEEN Interview, page 25)** Subject Steen went on a trip to a lake with [redacted] and [redacted]



He said after he ended his [redacted] relationship with [redacted] would come to his house on a daily basis to console him as a result of the breakup. Subject Steen praised [redacted] for his loyalty during his time of need, when he failed to have support from his Department [redacted]. **(Volume 1, IAB-STEEN Interview, page 26)**

> **Note:** [redacted] served an [redacted] sentence and was [redacted]. **(Volume 1, IAB-STEEN, Exhibit "II" page 184)**

Subject Steen was a rider and avid enthusiast of Harley Davidson motorcycles. Witness [redacted] mentioned during her IAB interview of Subject Steen's fascination with motorcycle gangs. Subject Steen would tie a bandana on his motorcycle handlebars, and would grow his moustache like handle bars. Subject Steen also watched television programs depicting the motorcycle gang subculture. **(Volume 1, IAB-[redacted] Interview, page 10-11)** Subject Steen also has tattoos stating, [redacted] **(Volume 1, IAB-TRAVIS STEEN Interview, page 39-40)**

Subject Steen was at a lumber yard [redacted] worked at, and met his [redacted], [redacted], who repairs Harley Davidson motorcycles on the side. Subject Steen made arrangements with [redacted] to pick up his motorcycle from Subject Steen's residence for mechanical repairs in exchange for $300.00. [redacted] later told Subject Steen that [redacted] was a member of the Carnales motorcycle gang. **(Volume 1, IAB-STEEN Interview, page 31)**

Subject Steen mentioned he was at [redacted] one evening in 2011 or 2012, where he met another member of the Carnales motorcycle gang, named [redacted] Subject Steen said he discovered after leaving [redacted] that evening, someone had stolen his motorcycle seat. He said he drove home without the seat, and called [redacted] the next morning and demanded the return of his seat. [redacted] called back and confirmed [redacted] was in possession of his motorcycle seat. Subject Steen proceeded to [redacted] residence in [redacted] and retrieved his seat. Subject Steen was questioned a week later by a Major Crimes Bureau detective who asked why he was at the residence of a known Carnales gang member. Subject Steen subsequently warned his [redacted] to stay away from members of the Carnales motorcycle gang because the Federal Bureau of Investigations was watching [redacted]

While assigned to Santa Clarita Valley Station in October 2013, Subject Steen organized a "10-33" motorcycle fundraising ride which was sponsored by Santa Clarita Choppers. One of the donors, [redacted] was a member of Good Times Car Club. After Subject Steen ended his [redacted] relationship with [redacted] Subject Steen call [redacted] on his cell phone to go on weekly to twice weekly motorcycle rides.

Note: [redacted] was sentenced to [redacted] **(Volume 1, IAB-STEEN, Exhibit "II" page 198)**

Another [redacted] of Subject Steen was [redacted] who had a prior arrest in [redacted] **(Volume 1, IAB-STEEN, Exhibit "II" page 204)**

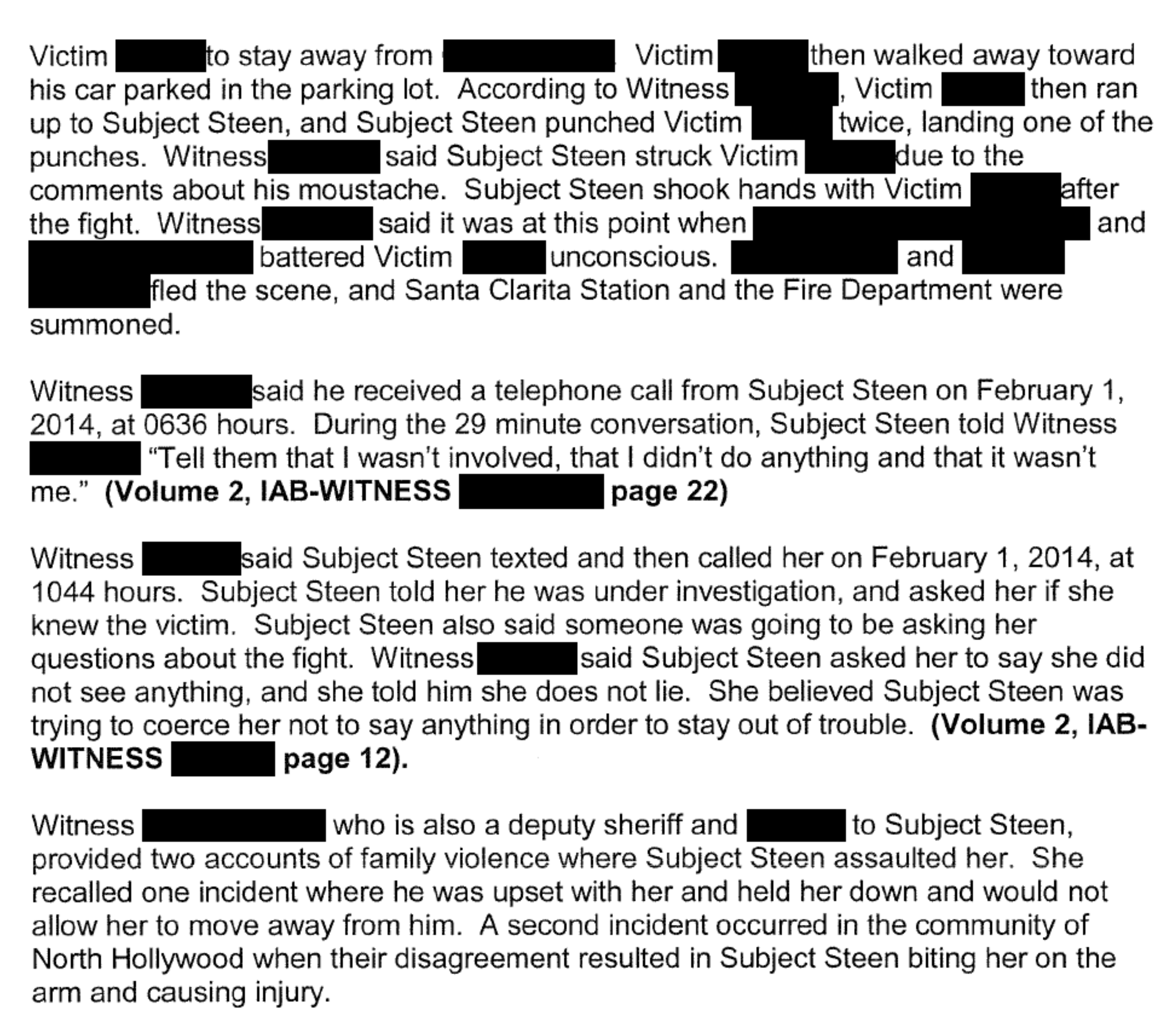
On January 29, 2014, Subject Steen went out with [redacted] for food and drinks at [redacted], which included [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], [redacted], and Subject Steen's [redacted] While at [redacted] Subject Steen and his [redacted] saw [redacted] and her new [redacted], [redacted] were seated in the bar. [redacted] was drunk and loudly laughing, and angry words were exchanged between her and Subject Steen's [redacted] walked to the bathroom and was followed by Subject Steen's [redacted] Subject Steen anticipated a fight in the bathroom between his [redacted] and [redacted], and Subject Steen stepped in between them with a [redacted] bouncer to avert a fight. [redacted] said [redacted] threatened to "bounce his head against the mirror." **(Volume 2, IAB-WITNESS [redacted] page 11)**

On January 29, 2014, after leaving [redacted], Subject Steen, [redacted], [redacted] and [redacted], and [redacted] went to [redacted]. [redacted] contacted a high school friend, Victim [redacted], outside [redacted]. She introduced Victim [redacted] to Subject Steen, and they proceeded to enter the bar. Victim [redacted] was accompanied by [redacted] and [redacted] Victim [redacted] was highly intoxicated and was spitting as he talked. While [redacted] and [redacted] were at the bar, Victim [redacted] spit into one of their drinks which created hostility between them. [redacted] apologized for Victim [redacted] and they walked away.

Later in the evening, Subject Steen was outside of [redacted] talking with Witness [redacted] and Witness [redacted] employees at the bar. Victim [redacted] was also outside, and commented to Subject Steen, "Dude, that's, you have a nice moustache. I'm like you clean up well. I just want to tell you your mustache is nice." According to Victim [redacted] Subject Steen then punched him in the face. **(Volume 2, IAB-WITNESS [redacted], page 3)**

Witness [redacted] said Subject Steen said to Witness [redacted], "I just want to hit somebody." According to Witness [redacted] Victim [redacted] then walked up to Subject Steen talking loud, and then Subject Steen threw three feigned punches at Victim [redacted]. Witness [redacted] was upset at Subject Steen because she did not want any fights to start at her establishment. **(Volume 2, IAB-WITNESS [redacted] page 3-6, 15)**

Witness [redacted] said he was outside speaking with Subject Steen when [redacted] told Subject Steen [redacted] was annoying her. Subject Steen then warned



Victim [redacted] to stay away from [redacted]. Victim [redacted] then walked away toward his car parked in the parking lot. According to Witness [redacted], Victim [redacted] then ran up to Subject Steen, and Subject Steen punched Victim [redacted] twice, landing one of the punches. Witness [redacted] said Subject Steen struck Victim [redacted] due to the comments about his moustache. Subject Steen shook hands with Victim [redacted] after the fight. Witness [redacted] said it was at this point when [redacted] and [redacted] battered Victim [redacted] unconscious. [redacted] and [redacted] fled the scene, and Santa Clarita Station and the Fire Department were summoned.

Witness [redacted] said he received a telephone call from Subject Steen on February 1, 2014, at 0636 hours. During the 29 minute conversation, Subject Steen told Witness [redacted] "Tell them that I wasn't involved, that I didn't do anything and that it wasn't me." **(Volume 2, IAB-WITNESS [redacted] page 22)**

Witness [redacted] said Subject Steen texted and then called her on February 1, 2014, at 1044 hours. Subject Steen told her he was under investigation, and asked her if she knew the victim. Subject Steen also said someone was going to be asking her questions about the fight. Witness [redacted] said Subject Steen asked her to say she did not see anything, and she told him she does not lie. She believed Subject Steen was trying to coerce her not to say anything in order to stay out of trouble. **(Volume 2, IAB-WITNESS [redacted] page 12).**

Witness [redacted] who is also a deputy sheriff and [redacted] to Subject Steen, provided two accounts of family violence where Subject Steen assaulted her. She recalled one incident where he was upset with her and held her down and would not allow her to move away from him. A second incident occurred in the community of North Hollywood when their disagreement resulted in Subject Steen biting her on the arm and causing injury.

Review of Applicable Guidelines for Discipline Sections:

The Department's Guidelines for Discipline lists the following analogous misconduct with associated disciplinary penalties:

Professional Conduct – Core Values	W/R to discharge
General Behavior	W/R to discharge
False Statements	10 days to discharge
Obstructing an Investigation/Influencing a Witness	25 days to discharge
Fraternization and Prohibited Associations	Discharge
Reporting Information	3 days to 10 days
Disorderly Conduct	10 days to discharge
Off Duty Incidents	15 days to discharge
Obstructing an Investigation/Influencing a Witness	25 days to discharge
Family Violence	5 days to discharge
Obedience to Laws, Regulations, and Orders	W/R to discharge

Assessment of Mitigating and Aggravating Factors:

Severity of Infraction:

The violations are deemed serious, and his behavior conflicts with the Department's Core Values. Subject Steen's behavior caused embarrassment to the Department. His actions ultimately led to an allegation of battery, and the need for an Internal Criminal Investigation Bureau criminal investigation.

Intent, Truthfulness, and Acceptance of Responsibility:

Subject Steen was not forthright in his answers. He knowingly made false statements during the Department internal investigation. Furthermore, he did not accept responsibility for his actions.

Degree of Culpability:

Subject Steen bears the sole responsibility for his conduct.

Past Performance/Disciplinary History:

Subject Steen was hired as a Deputy Sheriff on April 19, 2001, and was assigned to Santa Clarita Valley Station on April 12, 2009.

[redacted]

Disposition:

Based upon the foregoing assessment of mitigating and aggravating factors, the following is the level of discipline to be assessed:

__X__	Discharge
_____	Reduction in Rank
_____	Suspension for __ days
_____	Written Reprimand
_____	No discipline recommended